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DATE: November 10, 1980

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AIRLY TO ATTN OF: John D. Forbes, POL

SUBJECT: API Pre-election Analysis

178 R

TO: See Distribution

Attached is a pre-election analysis prepared by API, apparently for the visiting foreign press, as it did not appear in the local media.

Given the record and orientation of API under Corina Meeks, I find this a remarkably balanced piece and a reasonably credible analysis of the Jamaica election campaign.

The quote attributed to Manley that the elections will "truly reflect the will of the majority" is worth keeping for the record.

Attachment - a/s

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NEWS FEATURE

REFLECTING THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

BY: LESLIE THOMPSON (API)

Between 7. a.m. and 5. p.m. as stipulated by electoral statute, most of of the rest of the 974,000 registered voters will, on Thursday, October 30, go to the polls as the security forces did before them on Saturday (October 25), and cast their ballots to determine which of the two political parties - the ruling People's National Party (PNP) or the opposition Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) is to form the fifth Government in Jamaica since Independence from Britain in 1962.

Exactly 127 candidates - seven independents and the other 120 split evenly between the PNP and the JLP - will vie for the electorate's favour of the 60 Parliamentary seats at stake. The majority party will form the next Government on the basis of the seats won.

Polling between 7. a.m. and 5. p.m. on Thursday, will finalise the February 3, 1980 declaration Prime Minister Michael Manley made to the effect that as soon as the new electoral machinery is in place, he would be calling General Elections. Came Sunday, October 5 and he did just that, announcing that the country would go to the polls on October 30.

Unlike the previous elections held in the island since 1944, the 1980 version has built-in mechanisms which will "truly reflect the will of the majority" said the Prime Minister. That this means is that under the new electoral reform, bogus voting will be reduced to a negligible minimum if not totally eliminated. For such things as an integrity lamp to detect traces of ink on the fingers of those who have already voted and the need for voter to comprehensibly satisfy the polling stations officials of his or her identity with or without his enumeration certificate, are elements which have been established to undermine the bogus voter.

A Voter is required, on entering the polling station, to declare his name, address and occupation, against which the poll clerk checks his voters' list to see whether the name of the voter in question appears on it. If the voter's name is not on the list for that particular polling station, he will not be allowed to vote at that station but instead, referred to the place where his name should appear.

What is more, even if the voter's name appears on the list for a particular polling station, he has to satisfy the presiding officer of his identity before he is allowed to vote. Never before in the country's electoral history has there been such anti-bogus voter mechanisms, and never before, too, has there been such a string of violent acts, associated with the campaigning.

/2

More than 400 lives have been claimed in the election-linked violence. No particular age group has been spared, neither has there been any respect for the social class of the victims or the near victims. One PNP candidate, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, Mr. Roy McGann was killed along with his bodyguard, a police officer from the Protective Services Division of the Jamaica Constabulary Force on the early morning of October 14, But before, and after that event, which shocked the majority of the island's citizens, babies, teenagers, middle-agers and elderly people were cut down by marauding gunmen in murderous raids on ghetto areas, particularly in the Corporate Area. Even a soldier, in the execution of the maintenence of law and order under the Suppression of Crime Act, was killed and several other members of the security forces shot and wounded.

Gun assaults also marred electioneering. The Prime Minister was reportedly shot at on several occasions and other aspirants for office also met the same as they campaigned on the platform of their respective parties.

The ruling PNP which had 47 seats prior to the dissolution of Parliament under a proclamation by the Governor General, is seeking to create history by copping an unprecedented third term in office. On the other hand, the JLP is striving to upset those ambitions by winning the majority of the 60 seats, or in other words, to do better than the 13 seats they won in the 1976 elections.

The independents are not given any chance.

The PNP's platform is based on the continuation of the programmes it started when it assumed office in 1972. It is wooing the electorate with the call of "STAND FIRM" for the continuation of a number of people-oriented programmes such as the Maternity Leave with Pay; Equal Pay for Women; the right to join a trade union of one's choice; the more than 40,000 houses it has built in eight years; implementation of certain laws to protect tenants from landlord abuses, a minimum wage and the establishment of the infrastructute through which the people themselves, contrary to the past, will actually control the economy on a more democratic basis.

The PNP is insisting that its programmes which also include land-rights to hitherto landless farmers, free tuition from primary school to University, co-operatives, the vote to 18-year-olds and the abolition of the Masters and Servants Act are positive factors which speak of the party's commitment to the advancement of the broadest sections of the population.

On the other side of the electoral coin, the aspiring JLP is contending that the country's economic basis has been undermined by what it described as "mismanagement". The lynchpin of its overtures to the electorate is rooted in that theme, and it has, as its variations, flash-backs to the per-capita growth of the economy in the 1962-72 period when it was in office, the number of schools it built and that its record has been one of "better management" of the national economy. It states that once elected to office, it will restore the economic health of the nation via securing foreign exchange sources and investment funds on a large

/3

scale, to increase production and employment. It contends that it will bring to Jamaica "CHANGE WITHOUT CHAOS" based on the development strategies it has been working out, and is ready to put them into play once the electorate puts them in.

Who will lead the island as political leader for the next five years? That is the question which the electorate will answer on October 30. Pollsters however have been trying to gain an insight into the mood of the voters and, on the basis of their analysis, tried to indicate which party is likely to come out on top. On the one hand, there is one pollster working in the Daily Cleaner who says his findings indicate that it will be the JLP. On the other, there is a team working for the JBC-Daily News and the PNP own pollster, both presenting findings that it will be the PNP for a record third term.

Amid these findings, which contradict each other, there has arisen the natural controversy over which is accurate and which set of pollsters has been more scientific and as unbiased as possible in taking the poll and presenting the analysis. The latest JBC-DAILY NEWS poll shows that the PNP has turned back appreciably from the unnatural slump it had found itself in earlier this year, to take the lead over the JLP and further that the lead is likely to increase beyond the 1% margin by the time election day comes around.

The poll also said that while the swing towards the JLP in the western region is likely to be parlayed into a loss of the overwhelming majority the PNP has had in Parliament since 1976, that swing has been dimi diminishing or rather that the PNP has been making inroads to erode the swing against them and should be able to tack this unto their superior position in other regions to come home victorious again.

The Cleaner poll, on the basis of the "Cube Law" which pollster Dr. Carl Stone claims will maximise the JLP's seats-to-be-won position on the basis of how the votes are dispersed against the background of the swing against the PNP or towards the JLP, is saying that the JLP will take the elections.

The question as to who will win then is not therefore clear, but what is, however, is that each of the two major contending parties is bouncing with confidence.

Various organisations and interest groups have been openly and covertly trying to influence the voters' choice. What it reflects is the plurality of positions on the Jamaican political scene. But there are two broad fronts. There are those who contend that the country's economy needs the backing of big Western financiers and, as such, a party which will attract such sources should be at the helm of Government.

Then, there are others arguing that such a path would reverse the social gains brought to the Jamaican people under the PNP in the past eight years, and that what the country should elect to do, is to continue on a path towards self-reliance, diversity in international economic and foreign relations, non-alignment, and to persist in calling for a new

/4

World International Economic Order for the advancement of developing third World nations such as Jamaica.

A further variation of that theme is that Jamaica should not be a mere hanger-on supping the crumbs from the table of the super powers. Rather, the country should continue to insist on its sovereignty and fight for the right of the poor countries of the world to a fair share of the wealth.

There has also been voices appealing to the materialistic streak they imagine resides in the Jamaican people, hoping that a deep chord will be struck and reflected in how the vote goes on election day. On the other hand, there are voices urging the electorate to consider its historical past as a nation, the tribulation it faced, the point at which it began felling that it had the leadership to channel its yearning for true dignity and honour as human beings in the world community in the 20th century and whether that time is not the present and whether they prefer to go back to the "backra-massa" era of subservience and servility, or to continue in the path of true manhood and nationhood.

Again, which of the two paths will the voters decide on? How eill their decision be shown within the framework of the new electoral law? To what extant will violence reduce the voter turn-out and how will a large turn-out or a small turn-out accurately reflect the nood of the voters? These questions should be answered towards midnight, when counting is expected to be completed, on Thursday, October 30.

AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION (JAMAICA)

OCTOBER 28, 1980